RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

LEAFLETS
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SALVIA CLEVELANDII
CLEVELAND'S SAGE

Prepared
by
RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN
of the
NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Ana Canyon
Orange County
California

SALVIA CLEVELANDII

CLEVELAND'S SAGE

Labiatae — Mint Family

Compact rounded shrub 3-4 ft. high, usually somewhat broader than high. Young stems square, reddish, covered with short, grayish hairs. Leaves opposite, elliptical to obovate, blunt, the largest 1-2 in. long with petiole ¼ in. long, reticulate and greenish above, ashy beneath because of the hairs. Flower heads solitary or 2-3 an inch or two apart; each head subtended by 8-10 ovate greenish or grayish bracts, these ovate, about 3/8 in. long. Calyx glandular, about ¼ in. long, green below, bluish-purple above, the two lower teeth much smaller than the 3 upper which are fused together except for the 3 minute tips. Corolla rich blue or violet-blue, rarely white, narrowly tubular, about 1 in. long, hairy within for a short distance below the middle; upper lips 3/8 in. long, reflexed at an angle of 45 degrees to the tube and notched for about 1/8 in. at apex; lower lip with 2 lateral lobes about 3/16 in. long, broadly ovate, the central lobe slightly longer but narrower and gently curved. Stamens 2, exserted, the filament appearing simple, but jointed and bearing but one anther cell at its upper end. Style well exserted above the corolla lobes, the 2-cleft lobes about 1/16 in. long. Ovary 4-lobed, developing into 4 nutlets at maturity (or sometimes only 1 or 2 maturing). Seeds egg-shaped, light brown or tan, 1/16 in. long, slightly mucilaginous when wet.

The genus Salvia (the word derived from the Latin salvo, meaning to save, is in reference to the healing properties of some species formerly greatly used in medicine) consists of over 500 species widely distributed in temperate and tropical regions. Several species are cultivated for their leaves which are of value in seasoning meats and dressings. Dozens of kinds are grown for ornament and are sources of brilliant color in gardens. Flower colors are largely blues, purples, reds and white. In many kinds the calyces are as highly colored as the corollas. Most species of Salvia are commonly known as Sages, but they should not be confused with the Sagebrushes which are kinds of Artemisia, a genus of the Sunflower family.

Over 20 kinds of Salvia occur in California; two species are annuals; several are herbaceous perennials; the others are generally considered shrubs, but the upper branches are not woody. They are important bee plants and as a result California Sage Honey is well known for its delightful flavor.

Salvia Clevelandii was described in 1874 by Asa Gray, botanist of Harvard University, who honored Daniel Cleveland who had forwarded specimens collected near Potrero, San Diego Co. Although Gray described this species under the generic name of Audibertia it was later transferred to Salvia by E. L. Greene. Audibertia is now generally considered but a Section of Salvia. Cleveland's Sage is one of the most delightful of the shrubby species of sages found in California, but is not so well known as some of the others. It is found in western San Diego County, from the south end of the Santa Ana Range (Elsinore Mts.), to over 100 miles south of the U. S. Boundary in Baja California. It seems equally at home along the immediate coast at Torrey Pines north of San Diego, or at elevations of 3000 ft. in the interior mountains near Lake Henshaw. Cleveland's Sage comes into bloom in the wild in late May and June after many of the other chaparral plants with which it is associated have bloomed. As a result the deep vivid blue flowers which cover the rounded bushes are conspicuous on the rapidly drying landscape. Seeds mature in July and August, but can be gathered much later in the season if not all eaten by insects which feast upon them.

We have had Salvia Clevelandii under cultivation at the Garden since 1930 and have come to look forward each spring to the appearance of its first flowers. These vivid blue blossoms are probably the loveliest of all of the shrubby species found in California.

Salvia Clevelandii is readily propagated by seeds planted in flats in the fall or winter. The little seedlings should be transplanted to pots and set out in their permanent places as soon as large enough to handle. Ordinarily they will not bloom the first year. When planted in a sunny spot in well drained soil they will thrive for many years if kept dry during their summer dormant period. It is a good practice to trim back the plants after they have flowered (about July) unless the seed is wanted, in which case it may be done in September. In this way the bushes may be kept neat and rounded and will produce a better display of flowers the following season. Even when not in bloom the herbage has a pleasing penetrating sage odor different from the other California species.

Hybrids between S. Clevelandii and apiana or leucophylla are known. The former occurs in the wild and has been named S. Palmeri. The latter is from a chance cross at this Garden. Both are very vigorous and attractive.

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Of The Native Plants of California.

Established 1927

In Memory of John W. Bixby

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Purpose: A scientific institution devoted to the growth and study of the native plants of California for their botanical, horticultural and popular features.

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MAIL ADDRESS

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